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ABSTRACT

California's School Improvement Program for grades K-12 requires all participating districts to establish a master plan. This plan is intended to enhance intradistrict communication, provide a context for planning, help establish accountability, allow for the assessment of school and district programs and personnel, and generally clarify the administrative process. Mandated by state law, the two-part plan calls first for a permanent framework of procedures and policies for providing information about the program; for establishing and involving school site councils; for phasing-in schools; for serving students with special needs; for approving, evaluating, and terminating school programs; and for approving requests for released time. The second part of the plan requires the district to provide an annual description of its program's status. Districts must provide assurance that they will meet requirements for distributing information, providing staff development and school organization activities, inventorying community-based learning, and waiving curriculum requirements for secondary students of proved proficiency. Clarifications and suggestions for implementation are integrated into the statement of planning requirements.
 (Author/PGD)

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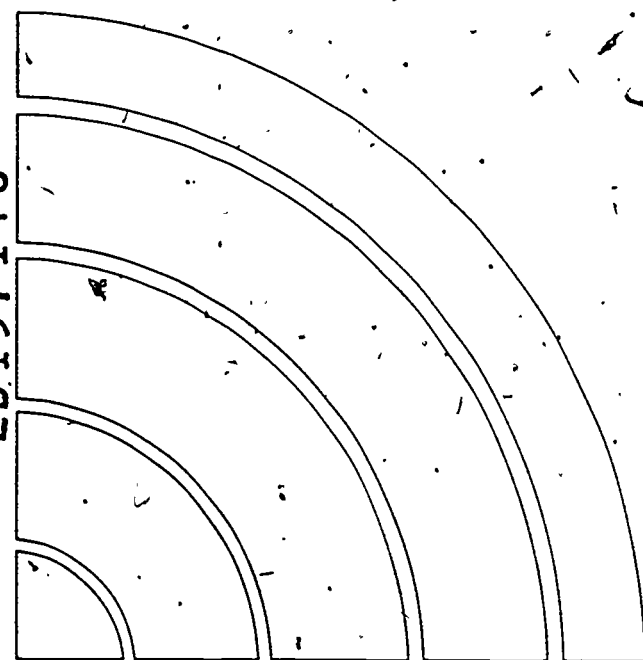
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THE DISTRICT MASTER PLAN FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT: INSTRUCTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

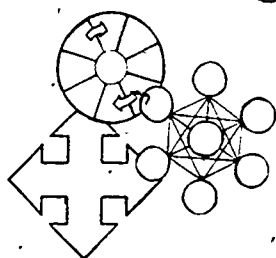
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Introduction

The School Improvement Program enacted by Assembly Bill 65 during the 1977 legislative session builds upon the experiences of the state, school districts, and schools with early childhood education (ECE) and the concepts encompassed in the *Report of the California Commission for Reform of Intermediate and Secondary Education* (RISE Report). By extending these concepts to all grades, kindergarten through grade twelve, AB 65 establishes a framework for districtwide efforts to plan, implement, and evaluate efforts to improve educational programs for students. Secondly, the legislation clarifies the roles and responsibilities of those initiating school improvement efforts throughout the district—including classroom, school, district, and governing board levels, the legislation also affirms the key role of the district governing board and administration in school improvement. The interrelationship of these roles and responsibilities form the framework within which each school plans, implements, and evaluates its educational programs and processes. Each district's Master Plan for School Improvement is an important tool in establishing the context for this interrelationship of roles and responsibilities.

The Purpose of the District Master Plan

The purpose of the district master plan is to provide a framework within which the district and its schools, in partnership, can initiate and sustain school improvement efforts. It is a framework which clarifies roles and responsibilities, delineates communication channels and decision-making powers, specifies various criteria and standards for conducting school improvement and evaluating the effectiveness of such efforts, and identifies who is

accountable for what. It is a framework for encompassing the comprehensive planning process at the school level with a complementary planning process at the district level.

It is important to note that many of the policies and procedures outlined in the master plan have probably already been adopted by the district or must be determined soon in order to provide necessary guidance and leadership to the schools with 1977-78 and 1978-79 planning grants and those schools that are making the transition from ECE to school improvement. The District Master Plan for School Improvement should therefore be used as a means of pulling together into a single document or handbook these policies and procedures and any others (previously established or yet to be adopted) which may be necessary to create or further enhance an effective working partnership between school and district.

The master plan can be useful in many ways:

1. It can provide a means whereby the district can communicate to its schools the district's policies, criteria, and procedures for conducting school improvement efforts within the district.
2. It can provide a context for districtwide planning and ongoing communication between the district and its schools so that the leadership, assistance, and services provided by the district to each school are based upon each school's capacity to respond to the needs of its students.
3. It can provide a means of establishing accountability at all levels—classroom, school, district, and governing board.
4. It can provide a means whereby the school district governing board can assess the effective-

tiveness of its support and leadership to the schools in their task of meeting the needs of students.

5. It can provide a means whereby both the governing board and each school can assess the effectiveness of each school's total program.
6. It can be the district's guide for effecting change.
7. It can provide a means for identifying key points in decision-making and implementation procedures that can have considerable impact on efforts by both the district and its schools to improve programs for students.

The more widely known and better understood the master plan is throughout the district, the more useful it can be. Thus, it is recommended that the district take steps to ensure that both the overall intent and specific elements of the master plan be thoroughly and accurately understood by all staff, parents, and, in secondary schools, students. A working knowledge of the master plan will enable those schools already participating in school improvement to plan and execute their programs consistent with the direction and leadership of the district. By becoming familiar with the master plan, those schools not yet participating in school improvement will understand the district's plans for school improvement and will be able to prepare

themselves for entering the program according to the district's phase-in schedule.

The Design of This Document

This document was designed not only to provide instructions for completing a master plan but also to explore the opportunities such a planning process at the district level can provide; in addition it identifies those issues a district may want to consider in developing each element of its master plan. *The readers will note that throughout the document, boldface italic type has been used to identify those instructions necessary for completing each element of a District Master Plan for School Improvement according to the requirements of AB 65 and other pertinent regulations.* Following the instructions for each element of the master plan is a brief discussion to clarify the intent of the requirements and to suggest things to do and to avoid. However, these suggestions are not to be considered requirements; they are offered as resource information to assist those who participate in the development of their district's master plan. These suggestions were developed with the assistance of parents, teachers, administrators, and governing board members who have participated in program improvement efforts in their own districts. The names of those who assisted the Department of Education in the development of this publication appear in the appendix.

Instructions and Suggestions for Completing the District Master Plan

A major objective in the development of the District Master Plan for School Improvement is that it become a useful tool for both the school district and its schools in the process of district-level planning and in communicating the results of that planning process to those involved in the School Improvement Program; it is hoped that the development of the master plan will not be viewed as a state-mandated task separated from the goal of improving educational experiences for students. Thus, those involved in developing the various elements of the master plan should be aware of how the elements affect students and how they are interrelated; in this way the master plan can be developed with a sense of its wholeness rather than as a list of policies, procedures, and implementation practices to be dealt with one by one.

It is also important to note that several of the elements of the master plan coincide with key points in decision making and implementation that can have significant impact on efforts to improve programs for students. These points should receive careful attention during the development of the master plan because of their capacity to effect program improvement efforts in a highly positive

or a very negative manner. Particularly important are the following:

- Processes of communication linking all groups at district and school levels
- Staff development, including the informing of schools and their communities about school improvement
- Procedures for making decisions
- Criteria and procedures for selecting schools that are to be phased in to the School Improvement Program
- Criteria and procedures for evaluating school improvement efforts
- The district's strategies to assist schools

The roles and responsibilities required in AB 65 and reflected in the California Administrative Code, Title 5, regulations are outlined below.

A REMINDER: All instructions appear in bold-face italic type, explanatory material and suggestions follow each element to be included in the district master plan, such material is offered as a resource to be used in developing the district master plan and should not be considered a requirement.

Part I of the District Master Plan

The first section of the master plan includes those policies, criteria, and procedures which establish the basic framework for school improvement efforts in the district. The elements of Part I of the master plan are outlined below:

1. Procedures for providing information about school improvement
2. Policies about establishing school site councils

3. Policies regarding responsibilities of school site councils
4. Procedures for participation of school site councils in developing and updating the master plan—
5. Plan for phasing in schools
6. Policies for identifying and serving educationally disadvantaged youth, limited- and

non-English-speaking students, and students with special needs and abilities

7. Criteria and procedures for approving school plans
8. Policies and procedures for evaluating school improvement programs
9. Criteria and procedures for terminating unsuccessful programs
10. Criteria and procedures for approving requests from schools for released time for advising students or conducting staff development.

Each district participating in school improvement must adopt policies, criteria, and procedures regarding each of elements 1-10 described in the paragraphs that follow. Please note that the adoption of these policies and procedures is not generally an annual activity. Once the policies and procedures are established, there is no requirement that they be revised annually, they may, however, be updated at any time if the district so wishes.

Copies of each of the elements of Part I of the master plan must be kept at the district office and at every school in the district.

For further information regarding each element, refer to the Education Code and California Administrative Code, Title 5, references following each item.

1. Procedures for Providing Information

The school district governing board must establish procedures to be utilized to ensure that the principal of every school receive information governing the provisions of school improvement and that the principal provide such information to teachers, other school personnel, parents, and, in secondary schools, students. Such procedures shall ensure that copies of the school improvement law, regulations, district policies, and other appropriate information are available at every school. References: Education Code Section 52011(a); California Administrative Code, Title 5, Section 4022(a).

How well a school and its community understand school improvement is a critical element in the smooth transition of schools from early childhood education (ECE) to school improvement. Effective communication is also critical in any effort to expand school improvement to include schools and grade levels that were not involved in

the ECE reform effort. The procedures for effecting good communications should describe clearly.

1. How the principal of every school in the district, including the principals of those schools not yet participating in school improvement, will receive information about school improvement
2. How each principal provides this information to the teachers, other school personnel, parents, and, in secondary schools, students at his or her school

The information on school improvement that must be provided must include the following:

1. Copies of the school improvement law and applicable regulations
2. Policies and procedures established by the district relative to school improvement as part of the District Master Plan for School Improvement
3. Other appropriate information (Other appropriate information might include documents regarding school improvement available from the State Department of Education as well as district-developed handbooks, guides, and so forth. Department publications that may be helpful to districts include the following: *Planning Handbook; Guide for Ongoing Planning; Establishing School Site Councils; Discussion Guide for the California School Improvement Program; and Technical Assistance Guide for Proficiency Assessment.* Information on the procedures to follow in ordering Department publications appears on page 23.)

When procedures are developed to keep schools informed about school improvement, linkages to other implementation steps, such as the following, should be kept in mind:

- Establishing two-way communications and a close working partnership between each school's school site council and the district governing board
- Establishing a school site council at each school prior to phasing in the program
- Establishing staff development as an on-going activity
- Developing and updating the plan to phase schools into the program

Those who are developing policies and procedures for providing information about school improvement are encouraged to examine the accompanying "Do's and Don'ts for Providing Information on School Improvement" on page 5.

Do's and Don'ts for Providing Information on School Improvement

- Do provide consistent information from school to school.
- Do emphasize that the scope of school improvement is a school's total program—all students, all staff, and all learning experiences.
- Do anticipate questions schools might have and provide answers in a context the school staff, parents, and, in secondary schools, students can readily understand. For example, for participating schools, point out the similarities and differences of ECE and school improvement. For nonparticipating schools, provide a description of the basic elements of school improvement in language that will be easily understood, and cite pertinent sections of the law. Also, let schools know how they can get more information.
- Do indicate the similarities between the intent and goals of school improvement and those of the district to improve the quality of its educational programs.
- Do include the step of informing schools about school improvement as part of the district's on-going staff development.
- Do use various media and methods of informing people; e.g., group discussion, visits to successful ECE schools, and other means of allowing staff, parents, and, in secondary schools, students to experience what school improvement can be at their school.
- Do build in ways of checking to determine whether or not the people to be involved have an accurate understanding of school improvement.
- Do consider training a cadre of staff, beginning with the principal, and parents at each school who can answer questions regarding school improvement.
- Do consider making the contents of the district master plan available in the form of a handbook.
- Don't give different messages from school to school which might lead to confusion, misunderstanding, and rumors.
- Don't present school improvement as just another program to be implemented along with the school's regular program.
- Avoid the extremes of providing too brief an overview of school improvement or of providing only a copy of the entire legislative bill.
- Don't present school improvement as an "add on" or as something that has to be done to get some extra money.
- Don't rely on one-time presentations, don't let unanswered questions and misinformation about school improvement build up.
- Don't just "talk at" people.
- Don't conduct one-way information sessions.
- Don't rely on only one person—e.g., the principal or resource teacher—to "tell all about it" to everyone, teachers, aides, other classified and certificated personnel, parents, students, and others.
- Don't assume every staff member and parent at a school will be able to "add up" all the pieces of information that have been provided into a meaningful framework on which to base their future actions.

2. Policies for Establishing School Site Councils

The governing board must adopt policies to ensure that prior to scheduled phase-in, a school site council will be established at each school to consider whether or not it wishes the school to participate in the school improvement program and to ensure that all interested persons have an opportunity to meet in public to establish such a

council; the interested persons will include, but not be limited to, the principal, teachers, other school personnel, parents, and, in secondary schools, students. (Please note that the final determination as to whether a school will participate in school improvement rests with the school district governing board.) Reference: Education Code Section 52011(b).

The initial guidance given to schools by the district in establishing a school site council sets the tone of confidence or uncertainty in which the school begins its school improvement efforts.

Clarity of information is essential. Therefore, it is recommended that the suggestions presented in the "Do's and Don'ts in Establishing School Site Councils" be given careful consideration.

Do's and Don'ts in Establishing School Site Councils

- Do answer clearly the following questions

What common steps or procedures are to be taken by district and school leaders to ensure that "all interested persons have an opportunity to meet in public and establish a school site council"?

What does "prior to scheduled phase in" mean? What is the deadline for establishing a council? How early may a school establish a council if it wishes to? Does the district encourage the establishment of school site councils whenever a school wishes?

- Do describe how a school may apply to the governing board for a planning grant if it is not scheduled to be phased into the program immediately and wishes to be. (Refer to Education Code Section 52013.)

- Do provide each school with a copy of the district's policies regarding school site councils and a copy of *Establishing School Site Councils*, a document prepared by the State Department of Education in November, 1977.

- Do encourage staff, parents, and students from each school that plans to form a school site council to visit or invite to their school members of school site councils which are operating effectively.

- Don't merely restate the language of AB 65 about establishing school site councils.

- Don't establish an inflexible schedule that doesn't provide for shifts in readiness or desire to participate in school improvement

- Don't make school staff and parents spend time figuring out on their own how to establish a council and what the district's policies for school site councils are.

- Don't expect written descriptions of "what a school site council is" to provide an experience of how one might function.

3. Policies Regarding Responsibilities of School Site Councils

The governing board must adopt policies regarding the responsibilities of school site councils and establish communication procedures to ensure reasonable opportunities for each council or its representatives to meet with the governing board. References: Education Code Section 52034(c); California Administrative Code, Title 5, Section 4022(h).

The development of policies and procedures outlining the responsibilities of school site councils represents one of the most critical and sensitive points in decision making and in the implementation of school improvement. The policies and procedures adopted should:

1. Set the tone for openness and cooperation.
2. Establish as a common purpose the improving of programs for students.

3. Clearly outline the powers of the school site council and the responsibilities for which it is to be held accountable.

4. Provide for direct access to the school district governing board as well as specify the channels of communication to be used through the district administration.

5. Describe procedures to ensure a close and effective working relationship between the councils and the governing board.

Such policies must be consistent with the intent of AB 65 and should outline any additional responsibilities that the board wishes the councils to perform. Several suggestions in this regard are presented in "Do's and Don'ts for Adopting School Site Council Policies."

Do's and Don'ts for Adopting School Site Council Policies-

- Be aware that the role of the school site council is not the same as the role of the school advisory committee under ECE.
- Do highlight in the policies and procedures those features of the school site council that are different from the school advisory committee under ECE.
- Do describe clearly the scope of the responsibilities of the school site council, the roles and tasks it is expected to undertake throughout the process of planning, implementing, and evaluating school improvement efforts.
- Do be clear that the ultimate authority and responsibility for the conduct of school improvement lies with the governing board.
- Do clarify how the school site council relates to the traditional lines of authority, e.g., district administrators, principals, and teachers.
- Do get the opinions and ideas of the members of school, advisory committees and school site councils, board members, and district office personnel before establishing policies.
- Don't assume school site councils have the same advisory function as school advisory committees.
- Don't expect district administrators, board members, school staff, parents, and students to identify on their own the differences between the roles of the two councils.
- Avoid the extremes of describing the council's responsibilities so narrowly that the council cannot respond to the problems at the school or so vaguely that the policies give little or no guidance.
- Don't forget to describe how the governing board and school site councils work together in achieving the best possible decision making at both levels.
- Don't describe the communication and authority lines of school site council to board and of principal to district administration without also describing how they interconnect.
- Don't establish policies and procedures without a thorough examination of past experiences with school advisory committees, a careful reading of AB 65, and discussion with others outside the district who have developed effective and efficient school councils.

4. Procedures for School Site Councils in Developing and Updating the District Master Plan

The school district/governing board must establish procedures that provide opportunities for school site councils to participate in the development and updating of the district master plan in order to ensure that the master plan is keyed to the school improvement objectives of participating schools. References: Education Code Section 52034(c); California Administrative Code, Title 5, Section 4021.

Ensuring that the master plan is keyed to the school improvement objectives of schools is essential to the success of school improvement efforts throughout the district and to the development of a close school-district partnership. The policies and the procedures to implement those policies, which

are included in the district master plan, as well as the strategies to assist schools, should be developed with the status of schools in mind. That is not to say that the district should follow the lead of the schools; quite the contrary. It is to say that once the basic directions and goals for the district have been established, the district should consider the actual situations of its schools—their capacity to plan and implement school improvement—as it guides and supports schools in their efforts to achieve district goals and their own objectives. Accordingly, the district should seek input from school site councils in developing and updating the elements of the master plan described in both parts I and II of this document. It is also recommended that the district consider the "Do's and Don'ts for Working with School Site Councils in Developing and Updating the District Master Plan."

Do's and Don'ts for Working with School Site Councils in Developing and Updating the District Master Plan

- Do meet with selected school site councils to assess what works well and what does not and to discuss issues *prior* to developing policies and procedures.
- Do follow-up and use the school site councils as sounding boards for reviewing drafts of the policies and procedures.
- Do meet with each school site council on a school-by-school basis when establishing strategies to assist each participating school.
- Don't wait until after the final draft of the master plan is written before involving school site councils.
- Don't involve school site councils only as ratifying groups.
- Don't develop strategies for assisting schools under the assumption that all schools have the same needs and priorities.

5. Plan for Phasing in Schools

The school district governing board must establish a plan for phasing schools into the school improvement program. The plan must include policies and/or procedures used to identify schools with the greatest number or concentration of educationally disadvantaged youth. The procedures must ensure that at least one-half of the district's elementary schools and one-half of the district's secondary schools participating in, any year are eligible to receive either ESEA Title I or educationally disadvantaged youth program funding. References: Education Code Sections 52039(b)(2)

(A) and 52011; California Administrative Code, Title 5, Section 4022(b).

The criteria and procedures established for phasing in schools to the program should offer schools incentives to participate and reward their efforts to improve programs. The degree of commitment by the school leaders, staff, and parents is an important ingredient for successful program improvements. In developing such criteria and procedures, districts may wish to consider the "Do's and Don'ts for Phasing Schools into the School Improvement Program."

Do's and Don'ts for Phasing Schools into the School Improvement Program

- Do involve staff, parents, and, in secondary schools, students, in establishing the criteria and procedures for phasing schools into the school improvement program.
- Do be aware that the guidelines for determining ESEA Title I and EDY eligibility are already established by federal and state laws and regulations; do apply them uniformly to all elementary and to all secondary schools in the district.
- Do become familiar with the requirements for selection of schools under the Economic Impact Aid program, which will begin in 1979-80, and incorporate as many elements as possible into the criteria for the selection of schools.
- Do realize that in the district, any school among the group of schools which are eligible for ESEA Title I and EDY funding may be chosen; schools do *not* have to be chosen in rank order of need.
- Don't postpone opportunities for people to participate in school improvement in their district.
- Don't alter these procedures from school to school.
- Don't disappoint schools on the phase-in schedule by making a last minute change in the criteria when Economic Impact Aid becomes effective in 1979-80.
- Don't create for the ESEA Title I and EDY schools criteria and procedures which are radically different from those used for selecting the other 50 percent of the participating schools; do maximize incentives and encouragements as much as possible.

Do's and Don'ts for Phasing Schools into the School Improvement Program (Continued)

- Do consider a variety of factors in determining the criteria for phasing in schools, such as readiness, enthusiasm, desire and commitment of principal, staff, and parents, and, in secondary schools, students; leadership skills of the principal and key staff; school climate; and understanding of and support for school improvement goals by all groups at the school.
- Do allow for a variety of ways to obtain information about the schools, such as those listed above, e.g., observation through on-site visits, panel review, interviews with selected staff, parents, and students, and so forth.
- Do consider reassessing frequently the order for phasing in schools, perhaps annually, so that data will be current with the status of each of the schools.
- Do compare notes with those in other districts and examine research findings to identify the characteristics of programs which are associated with success in implementing change; build these characteristics into your district's criteria and procedures for phasing in schools.
- Don't establish criteria for phasing in schools solely on the basis of need and/or on the basis of which schools do not receive consolidated application money.
- Don't make judgments based on one source of information, e.g., how well the school can write a plan or how good its achievement scores are.
- Don't discourage schools from making early efforts to prepare for being phased into the program.
- Don't assume that the conditions in your schools or district are so unique that the experiences summarized in research will not apply to your situation.

6. Policies for Identifying and Serving Students with Special Needs and Abilities

The governing board must define policies and/or procedures to be used by schools in (1) identifying educationally disadvantaged youth, limited- and non-English-speaking students, and students with special needs and abilities, and (2) developing instructional and auxiliary services to meet their special needs as part of the school improvement plan. Such policies regarding educationally disadvantaged students shall, to the extent feasible, be consistent with district policies for the identification of students eligible for compensatory education. References. Education Code Section 52015(b); California Administrative Code, Title 5, Section 4022(c).

The establishment of these policies is particularly important for those schools in the district

which serve students with special needs and abilities but do not receive any special state or federal monies to do so and, therefore, may not have policies to provide direction. Also, by adopting policies for all schools in the school improvement program in the district, regardless of sources of funding available (e.g., Title I, AB 1329, etc.), the district establishes its own policies, not the policies of an outside agency which some schools must comply with and others do not. The district may also wish to consider having the policies apply to all schools, not just those involved in school improvement. In doing so, the district can take the leadership role and state its commitment to these students, the priority for resources, and its expectations for schools in serving students' needs. In establishing policies for this element of the master plan, districts may wish to consider the "Do's and Don'ts for Developing Policies for Identifying and Serving Students with Special Needs and Abilities."

Do's and Don'ts for Developing Policies for Identifying and Serving Students with Special Needs and Abilities

- Do describe clearly the policies to be used by all schools to identify students with special needs and abilities and how their needs should be planned for and met through the school improvement plan.
- Do state clearly what the district's commitment to students with special needs and abilities is and what level of priority the district has placed on the support services for the schools in which these students are enrolled.
- Do consider including all schools in these policies, not just those in school improvement.
- Do become familiar with the interdistrict allotment plan which is part of the Economic Impact Aid program that becomes effective in 1979-80.
- Don't expect each school to interpret the various laws and regulations in a uniform manner throughout the district.
- Don't assume that schools are aware of the district's priority setting process and what this means in terms of tangible services.
- Avoid the possibility of double messages and conflicting messages from school to school.
- Avoid establishing policies now which do not anticipate Economic Impact Aid and which, therefore, will have to be significantly revised for 1979-80.

7. Criteria and Procedures for Approving School Plans

The governing board must establish criteria and procedures which the district uses in approving or disapproving school improvement plans in order to (1) ensure that school implementation plans comply with the provisions of the school improvement law and regulations; and (2) judge the potential effectiveness of the plan in responding to the needs of students at each school and the goals of school improvement. References. Education Code Sections 52034(a) and 52035; California Administrative Code, Title 5, Section 4022(f).

In affirming the key role of the district in school improvement efforts, AB 65 places the review and approval of school plans with the district governing board. It is important to note that this review includes not only criteria for determining compliance but also standards for determining quality of program planning and for judging each plan's potential effectiveness.

In developing criteria and procedures for approving or disapproving school plans, districts are encouraged to consider the "Do's and Don'ts for Developing Criteria and Procedures for Approving School Plans."

Do's and Don'ts for Developing Criteria and Procedures for Approving School Plans

- Do involve teachers, principals, parents, administrators, evaluation personnel, and program specialists in establishing criteria and procedures for reviewing school plans.
- Do focus on these aspects of the planning process and the plan which reinforce good planning.
- Do bear in mind that the criteria should address two levels: (1) compliance with law and regulations, and (2) potential effectiveness of the plan in responding to student needs.
- Don't impose criteria and procedures which may not be useful to schools.
- Don't overemphasize the plan as a written document at the expense of the planning process.
- Don't review for compliance only, don't pass up an opportunity for exerting leadership for improving the quality of programs.

Do's and Don'ts for Developing Criteria and Procedures for Approving School Plans (Continued)

- Do plan for thorough inservice training on the district's evaluation procedures and criteria so that they are clearly understood by all those involved in school improvement at the district and at each participating school.
- Before schools begin their planning or updating efforts, provide inservice training on program planning and explain clearly what the established procedures and criteria for determining legal compliance and potential effectiveness are.
- Do consider establishing a process to ensure communication between each school's school site council and the district throughout the process of developing or updating the plan.
- Do utilize the following Department of Education documents as resources in selecting criteria (1) *Planning Handbook*, (2) *Guide for Ongoing Planning*, (3) *Manual of Requirements and Instructions for Consolidated Application Programs*, and (4) "Program Quality Review Instrument."
- Don't allow schools to plan and implement programs without a clear understanding of district adopted criteria and procedures.
- Don't allow schools to develop or update their plans without getting assistance in understanding the various options and procedures in the program planning process.
- Don't wait until the last minute to give the school feedback in its plan and planning process, to the degree possible, eliminate surprises.
- Don't fail to use all available resources, particularly regular on-site visits by persons knowledgeable about both the process of planning and the options for planning.

8. Policies and Procedures for Evaluating School Improvement Programs

The governing board must establish policies and/or procedures for the evaluation of schools participating in the school improvement program in meeting their objectives consistent with the requirements for school-level evaluation contained in Education Code Section 52015(g). Such policies and/or procedures shall ensure the adequacy of school procedures in evaluating the effectiveness of the program. References: Education Code Section

52034(e). California Administrative Code, Title 5, Section 4022(d).

The policies and procedures for evaluation of school improvement efforts should address two levels. (1) the district's need for districtwide evaluation standards, and (2) each school's need for flexibility in designing evaluation approaches appropriate to its plan. In developing this element of the master plan, the district may wish to examine the "Do's and Don'ts for Establishing Policies and Procedures for Evaluating School Improvement Programs."

Do's and Don'ts for Establishing Policies and Procedures for Evaluating School Improvement Programs

- Do obtain input from teachers, parents, school and district administrators, and evaluators in establishing the district evaluation criteria and procedures.
- Don't impose evaluation criteria or procedures which may not be meaningful or useful to the district and its schools.

Do's and Don'ts for Establishing Policies and Procedures for Evaluating School Improvement Programs (Continued)

- Do establish evaluation procedures which allow for diversity of programs from school to school, as appropriate, to meet the needs of students.
- Do consider a variety of ongoing evaluation approaches which assess all aspects of the school's program. Such approaches might include classroom observation, interviews, and so forth.
- Do build in procedures which are effective for evaluating the program's success in meeting the needs of students with differing needs; e.g., transient, gifted, limited-English-speaking students, and so forth.
- Do view evaluation as a positive process for growth, one which builds on success and is part of the total school improvement program; do feed evaluation information back into the on-going assessment process.
- Do link together, when appropriate, the criteria for approving or disapproving school plans and the criteria and procedures for evaluating school programs.
- Don't establish evaluation procedures which are inflexible or that discourage program diversity when it is appropriate for students; don't establish procedures which will require schools to implement their programs differently from the way they planned or which will require an unreasonable amount of work to gather data and so forth in order to complete the established procedures.
- Don't limit evaluation procedures to student achievement data gathered at the end of the year.
- Don't design an evaluation procedure which does not include indicators of the progress of all students.
- Don't consider evaluation as an end in itself or as a negative process but as a way to strengthen school programs.
- Don't consider the criteria for approving or disapproving school plans and programs as separate and unrelated.

The Department will be preparing and distributing a *Handbook for Evaluation of School Improvement and Multifunded Programs*. The handbook will include Department policies and guidelines, suggested procedures for district and school evaluation, and a catalog of resources available to assist districts and schools in developing effective evaluation approaches.

9. Criteria and Procedures for Terminating Unsuccessful Programs

The governing board must establish procedures for terminating implementation grants to schools which are unsuccessful over a four-year period in substantially meeting the objectives of their approved plans. Such criteria and procedures must reflect academic achievement, program review, and other indicators of educational improvement established by the district governing board. Such procedures must include funding reallocation procedures. References: Education Code Section

52034(f); California Administrative Code, Title 5, Section 4022(g).

The adoption of criteria for identifying unsuccessful programs is a means whereby the district can establish minimum levels of acceptable performance on the part of its schools. The criteria developed can and should reflect the district's priorities and needs of students. In developing such criteria, the district may wish to consider the "Do's and Don'ts for Establishing Criteria and Procedures for Terminating Unsuccessful Programs."

Do's and Don'ts for Establishing Criteria and Procedures for Terminating Unsuccessful Programs

- Do involve teachers, principals, district office administrators, evaluators, and, in districts with secondary schools, students, in developing termination criteria and procedures.
- Do use existing district and school evaluation procedures.
- Do include in the assessment many different dimensions of the school program.
- Do use longitudinal information whenever possible.
- Do define clearly and explicitly the criteria and procedures developed; do describe them clearly to all participating schools as early in their involvement in school improvement as possible.
- Do build in early warning procedures which call for special assistance to a school when it is needed.
- Don't arbitrarily impose criteria and procedures for termination.
- Avoid establishing entirely new evaluation procedures solely for this purpose.
- Don't base the judgment solely on achievement data or program assessments.
- Don't base the criteria on indicators collected at a single point in time; e.g., at the end of four years only.
- Don't develop vague criteria or procedures that cause anxiety because they are not understandable or only serve to threaten; don't surprise schools with the criteria after the fact.
- Don't wait until the fourth year of unsuccessful performances before notifying the school or before providing special strategies to assist the school.

10. Requests for Released Time to Advise Students or Conduct Staff Development Programs

The governing board must establish criteria and procedures for approving or disapproving requests by schools, as part of their school improvement plan, for the provision of time during the regular school year to advise students or conduct staff development programs and receive full average daily attendance reimbursement, pursuant to Education Code Section 52022. Such time shall not exceed eight days each year for each participating

staff member. References: Education Code Section 52022, California Administrative Code, Title 5, Section 4022(e).

The intent of this provision is to give school districts maximum flexibility in implementing required staff development programs and advising students. In order to make this option a viable possibility for schools when they are developing their programs, the criteria and procedures must be clearly understood in advance. In developing this element of the master plan, districts may wish to consider the accompanying do's and don'ts.

Do's and Don'ts for Developing Criteria for Approving School Requests for Released Time to Advise Students or to Conduct Staff Development

- Do involve parents and staff in developing the criteria and procedures.
- Do involve parents in the school-level needs assessment process to assess the need for released time and to determine what activities should take place.
- Avoid bypassing parents or involving them in a cursory way at any step in the development and implementation of these procedures.
- Don't assume parents are well enough informed about their child's school to be able to appreciate the need for released time.

Do's and Don'ts for Developing Criteria for Approving School Requests for Released Time to Advise Students or to Conduct Staff Development (Continued)

- Do provide for advance and repeated announcements of the days scheduled.
- Do provide parents with a full description of what the time is to be used for, what will be done, what will be accomplished, and, in the follow-up, what actually was accomplished.
- Do view each school's request in terms of student and staff needs.
- Be aware that staff development is a most critical element in school improvement and has a direct effect on program quality. Its priority in the legislation is clear.
- Be aware of the importance of giving timely advice to students and of staff development in planning for and implementing a program which is responsive to student needs.
- Do plan staff development programs by utilizing a variety of sources to identify needs; e.g., analysis of student achievement data, observation by supervisor or peers as well as self-assessment.
- Do recognize the value of varying the method and approach in the staff development program to meet more appropriately the needs of the group addressed.
- Do review the criteria for assessing quality of staff development programs outlined in the "Program Quality Review Instrument, 1977-78" (PQRI), and follow the steps outlined:
 - Analyzing skills needed to implement the plan
 - Analyzing current skills of staff
 - Basing the staff development program on the discrepancy between skills needed and skills available
 - Building in a means for determining if skills have been learned, as demonstrated in change of behavior
- Don't underestimate the extent to which some parents must change their daily schedule when their children stay home from school.
- Don't impose inflexible criteria and procedures which will be uniformly applied regardless of the varying school needs or which provide the same number of days for every school which requests released time.
- Don't base the staff development program on needs identified through self-assessment alone.
- Don't limit staff development programs to just one method or approach.
- Don't approve requests for released time unless a thorough needs assessment has been conducted and a good plan has been developed for using the time to accomplish specific tasks.

Part II of the District Master Plan

The second part of the master plan includes descriptions of those actions already taken by the district and those to be undertaken in the coming year as it implements school improvement efforts in accordance with its established policies, criteria, and procedures, as outlined in the first part of the Master Plan for School Improvement. Part II of the master plan includes the following:

1. Description of participation by staff, parents, and, in secondary schools, students in developing and updating the district master plan
2. Description of participation by school site councils in developing and updating the district master plan
3. The district's strategies to assist schools receiving planning grants
4. The district's strategies to assist schools implementing programs under the consolidated application
5. Copies of all approved school plans
6. Assurance by each participating district that (1) the elements of the master plan adopted by the governing board in Part I of the master plan are available at the district office and at every school in the district, and (2) the district has initiated an examination of school organizational patterns and staff development regarding school improvement
7. Assurance by districts with participating secondary schools that (1) an inventory of community-based learning opportunities has been initiated, and (2) provisions to waive "seat time" have been initiated

Each district participating in the school improvement program must develop each of these seven elements. Each must be kept at the district office and made available as follows:

- Copies of elements 1-7 must be submitted to the State Department of Education. Two copies of elements 1-4 and 6-7 and three copies of element 5 must be mailed by July 1, 1978.
- A copy of elements 1 and 2 must be kept at each participating school.

Please note that the district's strategies to assist each school must, of course, be clearly communicated in writing to the school to receive such assistance, but the total description of the district's strategies does NOT have to be kept on site at all participating schools.

Each element in Part II of the master plan must be reviewed annually and updated as necessary.

If further information is needed regarding the elements in part II of the plan, note the references to relevant sections of the Education Code and to the California Administrative Code, Title 5, that are included in the description of each item.

1. Participation in Developing and Updating the District Master Plan by Staff, Parents, and Others

Describe the form and extent of participation by classroom teachers and other school personnel, administrators, parents and community members, and, in districts with secondary schools, students in developing and updating the district master plan. References: Education Code Section 52034(b); California Administrative Code, Title 5, Section 4020.

2. Participation in Developing the District Master Plan by School Site Councils

Describe the nature and extent of participation by school site councils in the developing and updating of the district master plan in order to ensure that the district master plan is keyed to the school improvement objectives of participating schools. (Such participation is to be part of the communication procedures developed under Education Code Section 52034(c).) References: Education Code Section 52034(b) and (c); California Administrative Code, Title 5, Section 4021.

3. District Strategies to Assist Schools Receiving Planning Grants

Describe the district's strategies to assist schools that are receiving planning grants. Such strategies must be keyed to the improvement objectives of participating schools. References: Education Code Section 52034(b)(1) and (g).

4. District Strategies to Assist Schools Implementing Consolidated Application Programs

Describe the district's strategies to assist schools that are implementing programs under the consolidated application to plan, implement, and

evaluate school improvement programs. Such strategies must be keyed to the improvement objectives of participating schools. References: Education Code Section 52034(b) (1); California Administrative Code, Title 5, Section 3930.

The development and implementation of strategies to assist schools during their planning grant year and during implementation of their programs constitute the most important linkage in the school-district partnership for school improvement. It is a linking process which requires a close working relationship between school and district and the development of means whereby the needs of schools can be matched with appropriate and timely resources and services available to the district for its schools.

The district's strategies to assist schools must be keyed to the improvement objectives of participating schools. In so doing, the district should recognize both the similarities and differences of objectives, needs, and priorities among participating schools. For example, noting similar needs for articulation between primary, intermediate, junior high, four-year high schools, and senior high schools might lead to a districtwide approach to the issue and, thus, similar strategies to assist schools. In like fashion, a group of schools may have a common need, such as assistance in evaluating program effectiveness for limited- or non-

English-speaking students, or schools in their planning grant year may need inservice training on how to plan and the options for planning. Still other strategies must be designed to match the objectives, priorities, and needs of staff and students unique to individual schools.

The strategies developed should encompass all the resources available to the district, not just those available to the district as a result of centralized services from consolidated application monies. Thus, the district should utilize personnel, materials, and other resources available from local, county, state, and federal sources when developing its strategies to assist schools. Please note that strategies are to be developed for each school funded under the consolidated application, including those funded by Title I/SB 90 EDY only.

During the year in which the schools receive their planning grants, particular attention should be given to staff development needs. During the implementation years, attention should be given to the shifts in needs and to the priorities of schools from one year to the next as they accomplish some objectives, state new priorities, or replan to better meet others.

In developing strategies to assist its schools, the district may find it helpful to consider the accompanying do's and don'ts.

Do's and Don'ts for the District's Strategies to Assist Schools

- Do keep in mind that the purpose of these procedures is to match the unique needs of students and staff at each school with appropriate and timely services and resources that are available to the district, do tailor the strategies to the particular stage of school improvement the school is in, e.g., planning grant year, initial year of implementation, transitional from ECE to school improvement, and so forth.
- Do make the allocation of services a school-by-school consideration so that the strategies will be responsive to each school's improvement objectives, needs, and priorities; do allow for flexibility of people, materials, and fiscal resources from school to school according to differing needs and priorities.
- Do consider developing a procedure by which schools may have input into assessing the effectiveness of district support services in helping schools meet the needs of their students.
- Don't lose track of the purpose of developing strategies to assist schools—to assist each school participating in school improvement to achieve its school improvement objectives which were outlined in the school's plan and approved by the governing board.
- Don't allocate resources in a general "across the board" fashion, don't base your analysis on generalized statements of need.
- Don't neglect to assess the process by which all available resources are allocated to and specifically tailored for the unique needs of students and staff at each school.

Do's and Don'ts for the District's Strategies to Assist Schools (Continued)

- Do look at how personnel could be used more effectively and how current services could be refocused and reallocated.
- Do identify talented people at the schools and outside the district who can serve as resource people to schools in planning, implementing, and evaluating the programs.
- Do think about how to organize, train, and utilize personnel and about which strategies and methods would be most effective in assisting schools; do realize that the answer to these questions lies in the specific objectives, needs, and priorities of each school.
- Do have both the school site council and the school district office do their "homework" prior to getting together to develop strategies to assist the school; planning grant schools should assess their capacity to plan and their possible needs for inservice training; implementing schools should state their objectives and refine their priorities and needs.
- Do focus on ways each school site council can communicate clearly to the district administration its school's needs.
- Do consider making staff development needs one of the highest priorities.
- Do make a continuing assessment of the effectiveness and appropriateness of the strategies provided throughout the year; do note any major modifications which implementing schools might make in their priorities as a result of their ongoing planning process or which planning grant schools might make when shifting from planning to preparation to implement.
- Avoid focusing on "how to get more" to be delivered in the same ways.
- Don't assume that all support staff must come from the district office.
- Don't assume that last year's answers to these issues will be appropriate for this year.
- Don't begin discussion before student-staff needs are fully analyzed and the district has assessed the effectiveness of the services it has provided.
- Don't assume school site councils know how the district can assist them or who in the district they should communicate with.
- Don't respond to short-term needs at the expense of long-term strategies.
- Don't wait until the end of the year to make any needed modifications in the strategies to assist schools.

5. Copies of Approved School Plans

The district must include copies of each school's plan for school improvement which has been approved by the governing board. Reference: Education Code Section 52034.

6. Assurance by Participating District

The district must ensure that:

- a. *The elements of the district master plan in Part I, items 1-10, have been adopted by the governing board and copies are at the district office and at every school in the district.*

b. The district has initiated the following actions:

- (1) *Staff development activities jointly developed with teachers and other school personnel reflecting the goals of school improvement*
- (2) *Examination of the patterns of school organization to determine which patterns best meet the needs of the students in the district*

Reference: Education Code Section 52034 (g), (h); California Administrative Code, Title 5, Section 4024

7. Assurance by Districts with Participating Secondary Schools

A district with participating secondary schools must ensure that the following activities have been initiated:

- a. *An inventory, in cooperation with participating schools, of opportunities for community-based learning*

b. *Design of processes by which secondary students may demonstrate proficiency in any aspect of the curriculum to pursue an elective course of study*

Reference: Education Code Section 52034(d); California Administrative Code, Title 5, Section 4024

Completion Date for the District Master Plan

Section 4024 of the California Administrative Code, Title 5, regulations stipulates that the District Master Plan for School Improvement shall be submitted at a date which "provides reasonable opportunity for districts to respond to the requirements of the school improvement law and these regulations." For most districts this would mean July 1, 1978. However, because of the need to develop carefully designed policies and procedures which interrelate with each other and because of the importance of involving various people—teachers, other school personnel, administrators, parents, and in districts with secondary schools, students—the district should consider its timeline for action carefully. Thus, if the district believes that the July 1 date would not allow sufficient time to complete adequately all the elements of the master plan, the district may wish to submit a request to have the completion deadline waived for some of the elements in its plan.

However, in considering its timeline, the district should consider July 1 as the deadline for at least the following elements:

Part I—items 1, 2, 3, 4, and 7. If the district applies for 1978-79 planning grant funds, item 5 must also be completed.

Part II—items 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6. If the district receives planning grant awards for 1977-78 and/or 1978-79, item 3 must also be completed and submitted to the Department.

Please note that if the district has any schools ending the planning grant year in December,

the district should delay until December, 1978, the submission of its strategies to assist those schools in their implementation year; this would permit such strategies to be developed concurrently with the schools' school improvement plan. Descriptions of the strategies would then be submitted along with the school plans in December, 1978. (Note, however, that all strategies to assist schools implementing programs from July 1, 1978, through June, 1979, must be developed and submitted by July 1, 1978.)

REMINDER The elements of the District Master Plan for School Improvement which are to be kept at the district office and at every school in the district are the following: all of Part I. Note that none of these is to be submitted to the Department of Education.

The elements of the district master plan that are to be kept at the district office and submitted to the Department are the following: all of Part II. In addition, a copy of elements 1 and 2 are to be kept at each participating school.

ANOTHER REMINDER. There is no prescribed format for recording the master plan. Districts should select a format which best facilitates widespread understanding of the district master plan; e.g., a Handbook on School Improvement, or merely a looseleaf collection of excerpts from governing board minutes. The number of copies to be submitted to the State Department of Education by July 1, 1978 are:

- Two copies of elements 1-4 and 6-7 of Part II
- Three copies of element 5 of Part II

Appendix A

Acknowledgments

The *District Master Plan for School Improvement* was developed with the assistance of parents, teachers, principals, superintendents, other district administration personnel, and governing board members throughout the state. The efforts of these people who generously shared their time and ideas are gratefully acknowledged.

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Appendix B

Special Instructions for Districts in Cooperatives

For districts that are members of cooperatives, the instructions for completing the district master plan are the same as for districts applying independently, except as noted here. All policies and procedures to be adopted by governing boards in Part I are to be adopted by the governing board of *each* district in the cooperative. Please note, however, that some of the elements, numbers 2 and 5 of Part I, are not applicable in school districts with one school.

All items in Part II originate in each district but should be submitted to the Department of Education as a single document, as follows:

- Elements 1 and 2 should include a description of participation of staff, parents, students, and of the school site councils in the development of each district's policies and procedures (Part I) and of such participation in the development of the local educational agency's strategies to assist participating schools.
- Elements 3 and 4 must include a description of *all* resources available to the local educational agency and district, not just those made available through

centralized services in the A-127D. For local educational agencies that are offices of county superintendents of schools, this must include services provided by the county office to direct service districts from funds made available to counties to serve such districts. For all cooperatives, section 3945(b) of the California Administrative Code, Title 5, regulations require each coop to "annually execute a formal agreement with each participating district regarding levels and types of services and amounts to be charged for those services." Thus, the development of this formal agreement should be part of the development of strategies to assist each participating school. (This includes schools funded by Title I SB90 EDY only as well as those which receive school improvement funds.)

- Element 5 consists of copies of each school's plan approved by the member district's governing board.
- Elements 6 and 7 may be submitted by the local educational agency as a single assurance that such assurances have been made by each participating district and are on file at the coop office.

Other Publications Available from the Department of Education

District Master Plan for School Improvement is one of approximately 400 publications which are available from the California State Department of Education. Some of the more recent publications or those most widely used are the following, with those developed specifically for the implementation of Assembly Bill 65 marked with an asterisk:

* Administration of the School District Risk Management Program (1977)	\$ 2.50
An Assessment of the Writing Performance of California High School Seniors (1977)	2.75
Attendance and Enrollment Accounting and Reporting (1977)	2.80
Bibliography of Instructional Materials for the Teaching of French (1977)	1.50
Bibliography of Instructional Materials for the Teaching of Portuguese (1976)	.75
Bicycle Rules of the Road in California (1977)	1.50
California Guide to Traffic Safety Education (1976)	3.50
California Private School Directory 1977	5.00
California Public School Directory 1978	17.00
California School Accounting Manual (1976 edition, including 1978 revisions)	1.65
California School Effectiveness Study (1977)	.65
California School Lighting Design and Evaluation (1978)	.65
California Teachers Salaries and Salary Schedules, 1977-78 (1978)	10.00
* Discussion Guide for the California School Improvement Program (1978)	1.50
District Paid Insurance Programs in California School Districts, 1977-78 (1978)	2.50
English Language Framework for California Public Schools (1976)	1.50
* Establishing School Site Councils The California School Improvement Program (1977)	1.50
Guide for Multicultural Education Content and Context (1977)	1.25
Guide for Ongoing Planning (1977)	1.10
Handbook for Reporting and Using Test Results (1976)	8.50
A Handbook Regarding the Privacy and Disclosure of Pupil Records (1978)	.65
Health Instruction Framework for California Public Schools (1978)	1.35
Hospitality Occupations Curriculum Guide (1977)	3.00
Physical Education for Children, Ages Four Through Nine (1978)	2.50
* Planning Handbook (1978)	1.50
Site Management (1977)	1.50
Social Sciences Education Framework for California Public Schools (1975)	1.10
Students' Rights and Responsibilities Handbook (1978)	1.50

Orders should be directed to:

California State Department of Education
P.O. Box 271
Sacramento, CA 95802

Remittance or purchase order must accompany order. Purchase orders without checks are accepted only from government agencies in California. Six percent sales tax should be added to all orders from California purchasers.

A complete list of publications available from the Department may be obtained by writing to the address listed above.